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THE HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS OF A THEOSOPHIST.

[A lecture delivered by our late Brother Pestonji Muncherji Ghadiali in the Blavatsky Lodge, Bombay on the 27th March 1898.]

DEAR BROTHERS—On the last occasion we examined from this platform certain general qualifications of one who wishes to join the T. S., in other words some pre-requisites or equipments necessary for him to possess before he can become a successful worker in the Theosophic ranks. To-night we are going to deal with the higher qualifications required of a Theosophist, that is one who is in right earnest, to tread the Theosophic path, the path of spiritual knowledge leading to Godhood and resulting in becoming a saviour of the world. As these latter qualifications have a close connection with the pre-requisite qualifications we spoke about on the previous occasion it is necessary to recapitulate them here. They are:—

- (1) A thoroughly unsectarian spirit.
- (2) An unselfish nature.
- (3) Impersonality or selflessness.
- (4) Tolerance.
- (5) Absence of idle curiosity.
- (6) Disregard of opposition, persecution or calumny, where truth is concerned.
- (7) Humbleness.
- (8) Faith, that is, will without doubt.
- (9) Desire to acquire spiritual knowledge for the guidance and benefit of others and not for one's own advancement.

It may be observed at the outset that some of these general and special qualifications may be inherent in the candidate for admission into the T. S., while others may be dormant or altogether absent, but they may be evoked or developed after his entrance into the Society by contact with kindred or complementary souls, just as a spark is evoked from flint by its contact with steel.

Now to begin with the higher qualifications we may repeat the two famous negative and positive formula of our Revered Teacher, as to who is and who is not a Theosophist, as they will bear repetition over and over again, and some of the higher qualifications, we are going to deal with to-night, are comprised in them. We will first quote the negative formula :—

"He who does not practise altruism or brotherliness in thought and life; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his fellow brother, of whatever race, nation or creed, wherever and whenever he meets suffering; he who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; and lastly he who hears an innocent person slandered—whether a brother-theosophist or not—and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own *is no Theosophist.*"

Now we will quote the positive formula which says—A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all, a readiness to give and receive instruction and advice, a loyal sense of duty to one's Teacher or Guru, a willing obedience to the behests of truth, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who have been unjustly attacked, and a constant eye to the ideal of human progression and perfection which the sacred science depicts—these are the golden stairs up the steps of which the learner [of spiritual knowledge] may climb to the Temple of Divine Wisdom.

In these two sublime passages both the general and higher qualifications of a Theosophist have been comprised, and we will now take up out of these such as pertain to the subject matter of our discourse to-night.

First we will take "a clean life." By clean life is meant a pure life both as regards body and mind. It is not the ordinary cleanliness as men understand, but it is that cleanliness which is akin to Godliness. The source of this cleanliness lies in absolute purity of thoughts, words and actions. This purity can only be attained by a perfect and

intelligent control over all our thoughts. In fact the entire bases of occultism or Brahma Vidya rests on this purification and control of thought, and no amount of mere study of spiritual literature is of any avail without this purification and government of our thoughts. The very first practical and useful thing which one learns after joining the T. S. is the immense potentiality of thought for good or evil provided, he has eyes to discern the practical from the practicable. He is indeed fortunate if above all other fascinating attractions which the Theosophical literature offers, his attention is drawn at the very outset to this all important fact of the power of thought. Once he is convinced of this fact which is easily verified by a little earnest practice, his progress on the Theosophic path is assured, and he soon becomes a devoted worker in the cause of the good of humanity. The motive power he has to use in this thought purification is his Will, which is of the essence of the Divine nature, and which in fact is the all-compelling force at the back of every phenomena in the universe and in man. The first thing he has to recognise in governing his thought is the workings of his lower nature, in other words his passions, desires, and emotions and the motives which actuate these, all which are in continual conflict with his higher nature. In order to do this he should learn to mercilessly self-analyse himself, and closely watch the enemies within him, whenever they try to assert themselves over his higher nature. Our Revered Teacher Madame Blavatsky has exhorted the aspirant for Divine Wisdom in the following words :—

“Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e'en though it be their shadow, to approach, For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster's presence.” *Voice of the Silence.*

These are not mere words of imagination or fancy or a mere figure of speech, but an actual ocular reality which can be seen by any one who is partially developed and is unfortunate enough to find himself in such a terrible situation. After due practice he realizes the effects of his thoughts on himself and on the world around him, as he affects them by his thoughts of love or hate ; he now finds himself as it were walking on the edge of a precipice with

an unfathomable abyss on one side and precipitous rocks on the other. One false step, one moment of wavering in this position is a question of life and death physical as well as spiritual. Thus as one advances on the spiritual path his thoughts become immensely powerful and so in proportion is his responsibility. Yes, his thoughts can now hinder or advance the progress of the world, and on him is also largely dependent the weal or woe of all creatures, from the highly conscious man down to the humblest sentient life crawling on the face of the earth. He has now in his hand a mighty instrument with which to deal life or death, and woe to him if he wield it for a single moment for any selfish purpose. It is as it were a trust vested in him by the Most High and if he misuses or betrays it, terrible and condign punishment swiftly overtakes him. Therefore those in whom this power has been awakened cannot be too cautious about every thought they think and every word they utter. So much for purification of thought. For full and detail explanation on this vital point I would refer our brothers to Mrs. Besant's excellent works entitled "In the Outer Court," "The Path of Discipleship" and "Karma"—works which every aspirant for Divine Knowledge should thoroughly study and digest.

Now we come to the "unveiled spiritual perception" spoken of in the passage we have above quoted. This is nothing else than the power to discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory, or what is called in spiritual parlance *Sat* and *Asat*. The cultivation of this quality is essentially necessary for winning oneself from all worldly attractions. Because so long as these influence him, he cannot walk with steady and unwavering footsteps on the spiritual path. One cannot serve two masters at once as is well expressed by our Revered Teacher—"Eternal life's pure waters, clear and crystal, with monsoon's tempest muddy torrents cannot mingle."

When this qualification of true discrimination is acquired, another naturally follows in its wake as a logical necessity viz : that of perfect indifference to all transitory or worldly objects and an utter disregard of all fruits of actions. "Because when the real is seen the unreal becomes so unsatisfying and so little worth striving after, that all objects and worldly matters around him entirely lose their attractive power." Having grown strong in discrimination he has not to make any serious effort to turn away from worldly objects, in fact they have no longer for him an attraction

in themselves; the very roots of desires are withering and perishing. It is not so much that he abstains from these desires, but that they lose the power to satisfy him in any way. As regards indifference to fruits of action it is to be observed that all fruits of actions being in themselves other objects are consequently unreal and impermanent, and are therefore to be eschewed. But by this it is not to be understood that one should do nothing, but that so long as the outward activity of the lower nature is not reduced to balance and tranquility one *must act*, but while so acting he should dedicate to the Supreme all the results of his actions, and attribute to him the power to do works rightly and well, and not to our own perishable and transitory personality. On this point our Revered Teacher has said :—

“ If thou are taught that sin is born of action, and bliss of absolute inaction, then tell those who teach thus that they err. Non-permanence of human action, deliverance of mind from thralldom by cessation of sin and fault are not meant for the eternal immortal human soul.”—*Voice of the Silence*.

Now we will take up “ a courageous endurance of personal injustice ” &c. alluded to in the above passage. This qualification consists in a patient endurance of all that befalls one from whatever source and from whatever quarter it comes. It is an utter absence of resentment or irritation at anything—an equable bearing of joy or grief, pleasure or pain, heat or cold, privation or plenty. In short an utter disregard of what are known as the *Dwands* or pairs of opposites between whose oscillations we live, breathe and have our being on this plane of manifestation.

But all this disregard to suffering need not harden ones heart (as would commonly be supposed) towards the sufferings of others, and shut up the fountains of compassion within our heart—compassion which is of the essence of the Supreme—but “ the soul has to become like a ripe mango fruit, as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for other’s woes and sorrows, and as hard as that fruit’s stone to one’s own miseries and anguish.” More emphatically has she declared this fact in the following words :—

“ If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son ; to disavow thy father and call him “ householder ”; for man and beast all pity to renounce—tell them their tongue is false.”—*Voice of the Silence*.

Having attained this high moral attitude no troubles can check him, no obstacles can turn him aside from his Godward

path, no praise or blame affects him in the least; no pleasure however exquisite, no pain however excruciating can elate or wince him for a moment. Dullness, voidness or emptiness, in other words the desertion of him by the whole world and everything that is upon it cannot discourage or daunt him. This position is that of a bold explorer who has determined to reach the top of an almost inaccessible mountain where the object of his search lies, at all hazard, at all risk to his life, and to achieve this he must necessarily be strong in his power of endurance. This position is very graphically described in the Divine Gîtâ —that Bible of Humanity—in the following words:—

He who hateth not radiance, nor outgoing energy, nor even delusion, O Pândava, when present, nor longeth after them absent;

He who seated as a neutral, is unshaken by the Gunas, saying, “The Gunas revolve”; he who standeth apart, immovable,

Balanced in pleasure and pain, self-reliant, to whom a lump of earth, a rock and gold are alike; the same to loved and unloved, firm, the same in censure and in praise,

The same in honour and in ignominy, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings—he is said to have crossed over the Gunas. (Chap: xiv 22-25).

Again Shri Krishna—God Incarnate—proclaims:—

He who without hatred of any being, friendly and showing mercy, without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and enduring,

Content with all, ever harmonious, with the self-controlled, resolute, with Manas and Buddhi fixed in Me, My devotee, he is dear to Me.

He who harasseth not the world and whom the world also doth not harass, freed from the harassments of joy, anger and fear, he is dear to Me.

He who wants nothing, is pure, expert, passionless, untroubled renouncing every undertaking, My devotee, he is dear to Me.

He who neither loveth nor hateth, nor grieveth, nor desirereth, renouncing good and evil, My devotee, He is dear to Me.

He who is alike to foe and friend, and also in fame and ignominy, balanced in cold and heat, pleasures and pains, destitute of attachment.

Unshaken by praise or reproach, silent, wholly content with what cometh, homeless, firm in mind, My devotee, that man is dear to Me. (Chap: xii-13-19).

Now we will proceed to the sublime qualification of brotherliness for all, in other words universal Tolerance. This is the higher tolerance, or tolerance which has grown out of real knowledge. It is the tolerance of every form of religion, every custom and tradition. A tolerance "which spieth no man's fault," in other words an unbounded charity which refuses to find fault with any one however low or mean, however undeserving or unfit. It is the tolerance which positively declines to criticize or condemn any body however faulty, however wicked he may be, and accepts the failings and weaknesses of his fellow-brothers as a necessary ingredient in their stage of evolution, nay, as if they were his own faults and failings. One with such a tolerance patiently, nay lovingly, puts up with them : and all affronts, all insults, all slights are to him as naught ; and he expects from none more than he can give or do. Finally this tolerance is not to be expressed in mere words, but it should be felt from the very bottom of one's heart and must be habitually cultivated in thought as well as in action. The realization of this tolerance marks a distinct stage in the aspirant's progress on the spiritual path.

Now we will investigate into the next qualification *viz.* Faith. This is the supreme unwavering faith in his Guru or teacher in whose hands he has placed his spiritual fortunes, and also in one's own powers and possibilities to scale the spiritual heights. This faith need not be regarded as a blind and unreasoning faith in the Guru, but that faith which is born of the actual experience of His unfailing wisdom, knowledge and powers this experience being gained by full trustfulness at first in the Guru to whom he wishes to surrender his all in all, and to whom he looks up as a child to his parent when it is learning its first lessons in walking. Nothing can be accomplished in this world without investing a little capital stock of our faith in any work in which we wish to succeed. If we examine the history of all great deeds, done by men and women in whatever part of the world, we will find that they were accomplished by souls who had supreme confidence or faith in their own powers of accomplishing the apparently impossible, without actual experience thereof.

If this is so in the material life how much more is this qualification necessary in spiritual life which far transcends the former in its scope and possibilities, a life in which every faculty of the mind, every power of the heart has to be cultivated to the highest attainable point of perfection :—

Were it not for this faculty of faith we would be now

without many of the wonders of modern civilization, which would never have seen the light of the day without this supreme quality of faith in their originators or inventors. Furthermore on closer examination we find that in our every-day life we do our day's work by the power of faith, however unconsciously we may be working by its help. To put it simply and as a truism, life would be simply impossible without faith. Faith is inherent in our nature and however much we may pride ourselves on not taking anything on mere faith we are unconsciously lead into it sooner or later. Faith is in short the basis on which manifestation of the universe proceeds. It is the mathematically exact and unerring law of nature in the hands of those who know how to manage it.

When the above qualifications have been acquired, the aspirant has accomplished a perfect conquest over his lower nature and he consequently attains a mental and moral equilibrium which is incapable of being upset by any powers in heaven or earth. In the words of the Light on the Path his eyes have become incapable of tears to his own throes and sorrows ; his ears have lost their sensitiveness to praise or blame or sounds of grief or joy affecting himself ; and his feet have been washed in the blood of his heart, in other words he has completely surrendered his heart and its emotions to his Higher Self—the God within him. Therefore he attains that balance, that composure and that supreme peace of mind which cannot be moved by any personal emotion, any gravest grief of his own or others. Because without this supreme equanimity he will be incapable of assisting others in their sorrows and their difficulties. Because he who wants to save others from drowning must himself become a perfect master of the art of swimming.

When the aspirant has thus harmoniously strung up his moral and mental parts, then arises in him, and not till then, an intense all devouring desire to emancipate himself from the bondage of selfishness and the shackles of the senses, in other words to expand out of his conditioned or limited existence, in order that he may be more free, and more powerful in helping on the salvation of his struggling fellow-brothers in this world, whom he has far outstripped in the race of evolution. It is no mere vague and undefined longing for emancipation which one feels in the earlier stages of spiritual training, but a resolute and well informed determination to reach the real goal of existence, a determination, which no difficulties can daunt, no obstacles can oppose. He is now

what is called an Adhikari or Mumukshu, one who is ready nay, has won the right to enter into the kingdom of God. He is now ready to meet face to face his Spiritual Guru, who was all this while guiding and watching his progress unknown to him—the Guru who is to give him the second birth or entrance into the spiritual realms, and lift him away from the miseries, sorrows and turmoiles of this unhappy earth.

To crown all this grand achievement the perfected man takes his final and supreme step. He has now the right to enter into the eternal peace and bliss of God's own kingdom otherwise called Moksha or Nirvâna—that eternal, all-peaceful, all-blissful rest which passeth understanding, that perfect rest indentical with the supreme soul. Paramatma Himself. Yes—all this grand prize is within his reach, aye within his grasp; he stands on the very threshold of Nirvâna. In the words of Sir Edwin Arnold in his exquisite Light of Asia—

“ He has thoroughly purged
The lie and lust of self forth from his blood ;
Suffering all meekly, rendering for offence
Nothing but grace and good ;

If he shall day by day dwell merciful,
Holy and just and kind and true ; and rend
Desire from where it clings with bleeding roots,
Till love of life have end :

He—dying—leaveth as the sum of him
A life-count closed, whose ills are dead and quit,
Whose good is quick and mighty, far and near,
So that fruits follow it.

No need hath such to live as ye name life ;
That which began in him when he began
Is finished : he hath wrought the purpose through
Of which did make him Man.

Never shall yearnings torture him, nor sins
Stain him, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
Invade his safe eternal peace ; nor deaths
And lives recur. He goes

Unto Nirvâna. He is one with Life
Yet lives not. He is blest, ceasing to be.
Om, MUNI PADME, OM ! the Dewdrop slips
Into the shining sea !”

But Compassion speaketh and saith—"Compassion which is no attribute but the Law of laws, eternal harmony, Gods very self ; shoreless universal essense, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things the law of Love eternal—Compassion crieth out can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer ? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry and groan under its burthens of sorrows and pains?" and he renounces Nirvâna for the sake of his suffering brothers, he turns his back on it and remains in this world of miseries to help them in their life-struggles and thus accomplishes the Great Renunciation. Such brothers are golden stairs up which one must climb before he can become a fit recipient of Divine knowledge, and Divine powers. Arduous and supremely difficult as the task is to achieve in the course of a single life-time, kind nature has provided successive lives in which to achieve this be-all and end-all of our existence. Yes, brothers difficult as this is it is still achievable by all men ; not the ordinary run of men but men who have determined to suffer everything for helping on the salvation of their fellowmen. For what will not yield to human will, to human perseverance? Men like us have attained this supreme attitude and are now watching over this suffering unhappy world of ours like veritable Guardian angels—"self-doomed to live through further Kalpas unthanked and unperceived by men ; wedged as a stone with other like ones, which form the guardian wall round humanity ; wall raised by many Masters of Compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, shielding and protecting mankind from further and far greater miseries and sorrows." Let us then brothers dear follow in their blessed holy footsteps, however humbly, however weakly it may be and hope to achieve what those Blessed Ones have achieved.

Seek not the wild, sad heart; thy passions haunt it;
 Play hermit in thy house with heart undaunted;
 A governed heart, thinking no thought but good,
 Makes crowded houses holy solitude.

—*Hitopadessa.*

AUTO-SUGGESTION.

THOUGHTS are things. What a man desires to be that he will become. Saying embodying these ideas are familiar enough to Indian ears, for they have been echoed up and down the length and breadth of the East by Sages for ages past, and their practical application forms the basis of that school of psychic training known as Raja Yoga. Within this century the West has also recognized to some degree, the influence exerted by mind and thought upon the body, and the practical demonstration of the fact in the hands of Charcot, Richet, Hack Tuke, and others, has put the matter beyond all doubt. But neither in the East nor in the West has the power of the mind, in modifying the human organism, been turned to useful purpose by the majority of people—its application to daily life until recently being entirely neglected. Now however at the close of the century the rapidly advancing West is beginning to awake to the mental powers potentially present in every man, and is proving what an enormously important factor thought is in the economy of life, and how much can be done with a mind if properly directed on the physical body. The process now occupying attention is called in modern language Auto-suggestion, or Self-suggestion. Let us take an example as illustrating the idea better than definitions. The physician says to his patient : " You will feel better when the medicine begins to take effect." This is an external suggestion. Then the patient, if he has confidence and faith in the skill of the physician, says " I shall feel better when the medicine begins to take effect;" he takes the original suggestion of the doctor, makes it his own, works it into his system, and the idea becomes a fact to him, this is an auto-suggestion. Now such auto-suggested cures depend primarily on the success of the doctor in implanting the idea in the patients' mind, and then on the power of the patient to take it up, and unconsciously build it into his system as a fact about which there is no shadow of doubt.

Again the foolish and mistaken suggestion of friends and neighbours that the patient is getting worse, or must die, may also be taken up and acted on with disastrous results. Thus the man who refuses to help nature by his own *will to live* and, by auto-suggestion, persuades himself that he must die, stands a worse chance of recovery than one who exercises his powers of auto-suggestion in the determination to live.

Examples of auto-suggestion in this direction have alas

been only too numerons among plague patients during the past year. A patient often dies of panic. How does auto-suggestion come into play in such a case? First there is the external suggestion—instilled into a man's mind from infancy and becoming as he grows up, an auto-suggestion of the most powerful kind *viz.*—that Karma, or perhaps the Horoscope, rules his destiny. Therefore when illness overtakes him he folds his hands and awaits the result, convinced that nothing will save him, when his time has come to go. Here however we should remember that the will to live is no more contrary to the Great Law of Karma (rightly understood) than the will to take medicine in the hope of recovery, or—to go a step further—the will to take food to keep the body alive. If our Karma puts us in the possession of the knowledge that life can be saved in their way, it is our duty to take advantage of it ; for Karma is our Schoolmaster who teaches us by experience how to convert ignorance into wisdom, and so avoid the chastening rod of kârmic suffering and pain.

Another suggestion which has been responsible for many deaths of late is that people are taken to the hospitals to be killed. This wide spread, and popular external suggestion is accepted as a fact and converted into an auto-suggestion in the minds of many individuals, and when the turn comes for one of them to go to the hospital, he is filled with a nameless horror, which often in itself proves fatal before he reaches the hospital door.

So far we have considered only the unconscious auto-suggestion which we are all more or less at the mercy of—for our five senses are bound to take messages to the brain and mind, and the latter is equally bound to work them off, for good or bad, upon the body. Now the only way to avoid the evil effects which may arise from this process, is to counteract the suggestions which we receive from without by "home made" suggestions in the opposite direction, and by practicing mental control, self knowledge, and development of the will, learn to wield the force which before had enslaved us, thus putting us in a position not only of safty but of power. This is precisely what the more advanced Americans are learning to do in the present day, and according to the *Buddhist* of February 4th are meeting with very good results. In an article in that paper entitled "Man made by mind" we read that the latest dictum of the American auto-suggestionists is.—"Whatever a man commands himself perpetually and persistantly to do or to be—that he is;" and this is no idle platitude with the

Americans, but a hard fact which they are using for all it is worth.

Teachers of all grade from the Kindergartener to the University Professor, are fast coming to a realization of this truth and urging auto-suggestion, whether called by this name or not, upon their pupils. And not only so but the men and women of the present day are rapidly learning how to use the power of auto-suggestion for themselves. Nor, are these statements true of one class of people alone; all sorts and conditions of men and women now reap the benefits of their own *well-trained and well directed will*.

"There is no power on earth so potent for steadying over-taxed nerves as auto-suggestion," said a Chicago man recently, whose editorship of a great paper entails an immense amount of mental and physical labour upon him. "Why a man can even make himself faint by auto-suggestion if he so desires, and why cannot he produce an opposite effect. When other men take alcohol, I brace my nerves resolutely, sit still for a moment or two, and suggest to myself that I am all right. And very shortly I am all right too. Insomnia can be cured in the same way, and likewise as easily. To effect this purpose for myself I simply suggest that I am sleepy, I am dozing, I am sinking into sleep. Almost immediately I do sleep. I have cured myself of insomnia in this manner when all other remedies have proved useless." Nor is it only strong-minded men who are able to practice this simple and useful remedy, nervous delicate women find the same success in their attempts. "What use do I make of auto-suggestion" repeated a lady of this class when the question was put to her, "well I use it for almost every trouble from finances to nervous headaches, and it works well in all cases. When I reach home exhausted with a days calling or shopping I never indulge in strong tea or stimulants as I used to do.. I lie down instead, and suggest to myself that at the end of half an hour or an hour as the case may be, I shall wake up fresh, rested, and bright."

Examples of this kind might be multiplied indefinitely but these well suffice to show to what a practical use this ancient and theoretically familiar, mental process is now being turned. The secret of success lies in success, once succeed in effecting a cure however small, and the door is opened to further victories, for confidence in ones own power, lies at the bottom of it all.

When we come to study, the matter from a theosophic point

of view, we see that in the normal man, the Ego or "self" is functioning mainly, is in the physical (sthûla sarira) and, desire (kamic) sheaths, and is drawing on the world (through the five senses) for his consciousness; in this state he is powerless to control the subtle workings of his body, he is like a boat sunk in water. What has to be done is to rise by an effort of will, to a higher level, say the lower levels of the mânasic plane, then he is as it were above the lower principles, and corresponds to the boat floating on the surface of the water. The Ego in this position has a power over the lower sheaths—the body and desires—over which we in our lower consciousness are powerless. Unconsciously the auto-suggestionist, is rising to some such level ; and in so doing is asserting himself as superior to, and master of, his body and desires; unconsciously he is asserting to a limited degree that which we all have to recognize, ere initiation can take place, *viz.* that I am not the physical body, I am not the desire body, I am not the mind body, but I am the Supreme Soul, 'that was, that is, and will, be for whom the hour shall never strike.'

The auto-suggestionists do not reach such heights but as far as they go they practice what they believe—and with success, because their beliefs, are facts to them. We in our transcendental philosophy take a higher stand, but how far are we practical? how far content with theory? How far do we make the mind our servant, how far do we let it "rip" ?

A. R.

TWO IMPORTANT LECTURES.

MRS. BESANT delivered two very important lectures when in England on "The Nervous System and Consciousness." She explained that for a real understanding of the working of *clairvoyance*, we must know something of the two distinct nervous systems in the body, for the different kinds of clairvoyance depend on the use of different organs. In the process of evolution the sympathetic nervous system was first developed, and it is through this system that all the lower forms of clairvoyance manifest themselves. This fact is important as explaining the coincident clairvoyance of many animals, especially horses, dogs, and cats, and also that of the numerous untrained psychics who are to be met with, both among the less advanced races of mankind, and among undeveloped people among ourselves. Such sporadic and uncontrolled vision may be an indication of a

less developed *Manas*, and tends backward to the animal type. As the Ego grows in intellect and gets more fully in control of his vehicles, his influence is exerted on the cerebro-spinal nervous system, and through *that*, and not through the ganglia of the sympathetic system, the higher clairvoyance is obtained. In Hatha Yoga, attempts are made to bring the sympathetic system under control of the will, working through the *medulla oblongata*, and this sometimes results in producing low forms of clairvoyance, owing to the possibility of response to lower astral vibrations in the astral matter of the nervous ganglia of that system : but this is working from below, is often injurious, and always impermanent and uncertain in results ; it is in fact a reversion to the type of animal clairvoyance, and not a development of higher vision. He who would develop real occult powers must develop and improve his physical brain. We are continually by thought increasing the grey matter of the brain, and deepening and multiplying its convolutions. In this grey matter, which ordinary physiology associates with *thinking*, ether is more largely present as the process of refining, purifying, and stimulating (by thought) goes on, and on the presence of the finer ethers, the possibility of increased sensitiveness to higher vibrations depends. This is why in all schools of occultism connected with the White Lodge, perfect purity of life is insisted upon. Celibacy was regarded as a *sine qua non*, because not while life-energy was devoted to the re-productive faculties could the sacred fire of *kundalini* be safely awakened to play from chakra to chakra in the body. In the lower forms of clairvoyance there is an entire absence of this sacred fire which characterises the higher. In the lower form, the whole astral body is set vibrating ; in the higher, only the chakras—which correspond to the cerebro-spinal chakras in the physical body—are impelled directly by the higher will.

In dealing more fully with the growth and training of those organs in the brain on which the development of higher clairvoyance depends, Mrs. Besant referred to a double process which went on simultaneously. Firstly, the development of the organ as a whole, and secondly, the development of the atoms and particles of which the organ was composed. The organs referred to—the pituitary body and the pineal gland—are composed of matter in its gaseous, liquid and solid states, and the chief difference between the organs in different people observable by etheric or astral sight—is a difference as to the

coarseness or fineness of the particles. The primary thing, therefore, for the student to do, is to clean up, the organs in the way insisted upon for the purification of the body generally, *viz.* :— by pure food, abstinence from flesh and alcohol, pure living, personal cleanliness, and pure thought. Given these conditions, the organs will begin to improve in texture and to include more etheric particles in proportion to the solid, liquid or gaseous constituents, and these denser particles will themselves become more highly vitalised, more nourished with blood. The astral matter changes, *pari passu* with the physical; the manasic particles follow the same law, and an increased sensitiveness to vibrations from higher planes follows as a matter of course. Through the pituitary body these vibrations reach the grey matter of the brain. While this improvement is going on in the constituents as a whole, the ultimate physical atoms of which they are composed are likewise undergoing development, and whereas in the normal, ultimate, physical atom in the present stage of evolution, four only of the seven sets of spirillæ which exist in it are in active operation and three are latent, in the atom worked upon by this artificial evolution—or forcing process—the latent three are gradually brought into activity. It follows, therefore, that by each conscious effort at self-development, we are endeavouring to realise a condition of things which will not normally characterise our physical sheaths until a much later period of evolution. Hence the enormous difficulty of the task we set ourselves and, correspondingly, the gain to ourselves and the race if we achieve it.

Mrs. Besant, in concluding her second lecture, showed how, at a later stage, that of adeptship when consciousness on the Nirvânic plane was reached, the consciousness of each cell of the body became linked with the consciousness of the Adept, so that the will could be directed to any cell of the bodily organism, and the power of instantaneous healing of wounds was thus possible. Even the attainment of consciousness on the Buddhic plane gave foreknowledge of this: the disciple became conscious of the presence of Buddhi in the cells. Threads of Buddhic matter were visible as the combining force in the cells, and this explained what students had often puzzled about—a saying of H.P.B.'s—that the consciousness of the cells was the consciousness of *Ātma-Buddhi*.

WHITE LOTUS DAY.

BOMBAY BRANCH.

WHITE Lotus Day (May 8th) was observed in all its solemnity by the Bombay members of the T. S. at the Blavatsky Lodge. The day opened with a meeting for members at 7 A. M. and closed with a public meeting in the evening. Notwithstanding the absence of many of the members from Bombay, the hall was crowded as is usual on this occasion. The portrait of H. P. B. which was decorated with white lotus lilies and other flowers, was placed on the dais.

The President, Brother D. Gostling, opened the proceedings with a few well chosen and appropriate words, after which Bro. P. D. Khan read selections from the Bhagvad Gitâ, and Bro. Manmohundas D. Shroff recited some Sanskrit verses which he translated into vernacular for the benefit of the Guzerati hearers. Bro. Dadabhai J. Sonavala next gave selected passages from the Higher Life of the Lord Buddha, and Bro. N. F. Billimoria chanted verses suitable to the occasion from the Zoroastrian Gathas, rendering them into English for the benefit of the assembly. Bro. Martandrao B. Nagnath, one of the oldest members of our Society, next read passages from the "Gems from the East" and Bro. Pestonji D. Mahaluxmiwala, read from Mrs. Besant's writings on H. P. B., next Bro. D. D. Jussawala gave extract from the Song Celestial, and Bro. Modi chanted a chapter of the Zoroastrian Gatha. He then reminded the members that the twenty-four hours of that special day were being kept, all over the world, in sacred memory of H. P. B., for while her followers in one hemisphere retire to take rest, others will rise to observe the day in the other hemisphere, thus the rightly deserved gratitude of the Society in every land will rise to H. P. B. to whom we owe our existance as a Society, and through whose teachings truth has been spread throughout the world.

In closing the meeting the president expressed the hope that the gathering together that evening would result in a closer union of all present in the cause of truth, so that they might go forth with fresh vigour to help mankind. He trusted that the beautiful passages they had just heard would remain in their minds till the following year, when they would meet again to perpetuate the memory of one who was the means of carrying divine knowledge to humanity. The proceedings then terminated.

BANGALORE BRANCH.

The Secretary of the Bangalore Branch has kindly sent us an account of the celebration of the white Lotus Day in that town, together with a valuable address delivered by the President, an abstract of which we here give.

In the morning of May 8th cart loads of food were sent round the crowded portions of the town for distribution among the poor. At 6-30 P. M. a commemorative meeting was held in the Branch Premises. The Secretary, Mr. A. Singaravelu Moodelier, opened the meeting with a short speech in which he said it was our duty to show our gratitude to H. P. B. for her unselfish labours by carrying her teachings far and wide. Our object should be to try to do—even a little—so that we could show some work done when they met again to celebrate the day a year hence.

The President Mr. T. C. Mohaswamy Pillai then addressed the meeting. He reminded the members that they constituted a brotherhood, unique in the world's history in that it was universal in its character, and so broad in its principles that it embraced within its fold men of every shade of opinion, and people of every nationality and grade of intellect. H. P. B. undertook the task of awakening mankind to a sense of the supersensuous or superphysical realm, and instructed them in the principles of that wisdom religion which is beyond the bounds of any description or time or place, a religion which must needs prevail for all time. She combined a life of complete self-denial, with a thorough devotion to the concerns of humanity, and of total self-abnegation, with an inexhaustable wealth of spiritual knowledge—which never diminished with the giving. But how have we discharged our debt of gratitude to her? How many of us make honest efforts in thought to reach those spheres of matchless beauty and illimitable glory, which language fails to appropriately clothe, which she pointed out to us. How far do we appreciate the thankless task she undertook in trying to uplift our earth-bound thoughts, so as to facilitate their progress by opening up vistas of life before our limited vision, and above all for breathing fresh life into our nation—which was on the decline spiritually as in every other respect. Our gratitude cannot be better shown than by giving a loyal devotion to the Society, founded through her instrumentality, and by forming a faithful resolution to follow out in practice the noble and priceless truths she gave her life to establish. It is the Path of Service which we have

to seek, and the one weapon with which we can disperse the clouds which tend to lower our spiritual horizon is—Selflessness.

The more selfish a man is the narrower becomes the sphere of his self and action. This is amply born out by every day experience, and it will not be far wrong to presume that every selfish thought thickens the layer of darkness and invincible ignorance over our souls ; it is this that blinds us to our own real interests, keeping us effectually back from leading the life that would span the gulf between the known and the unknown. In the Song Celestial no less mighty a personage than Shri Krishna says ; “the self is the only friend of the self, and the self is the only enemy of the self ; elsewhere he says, to live for others is too great a privilege to be easily valued by man, so much does he set his self against himself.

Experience shows that repeated efforts have to be made before the Path of Service is discerned and realized as the only path that can safely lead the neophyte to his destination. In fulfilling the very first condition to enter this path man purges the lower self of its impurities, sublimates his animal nature, and transmutes it into the self Divine. It was this process that earned for the Rosicrucians the title “Thaumaturgists” and “Alchemists,” names implying the conversion of the lower nature into the higher—that was the aim of these Philosophers. “Know thyself was traced in letters of fire on the finger board that pointed to the inner sanctuary of the Gnostic Mystics.

After glancing at the rules laid down by the Hindu scriptures—unmatched in pre or post Christian times—for the development and guidance of the neophyte from childhood upwards, the speaker showed that the labour of centuries to safe-guard mankind had been thrown to the winds, without a moments thought, and the essentially selfish ideas of Matriatism had taken their place. He went on to say, it is no idle remark of the Puranika when we hear him say that the Gods listen to our earnest prayers in the hour of severest trial and need, and bespeak the attention of the Supreme in our dire supplication. It is then that he descends from on high, or sends out a messenger to rescue humanity—our religion is familiar with the details of the Avatara—and Shri Krishna has vouch-safed His divine protection to humanity where he says : “ Wheresoever virtue is in the decline, O Bhârata, I appear on the scene to root out evil and support virtue.” If on the contrary the supreme does not reincarnate

we find the Mahâpurusha sending out their disciples to help humanity under their guidance. H. P. B. was one of these disciples, an initiate, a messenger of the gods. "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry"? It is this passage, in the Voice of the Silence, that causes the advancing soul to pause and if the lessons of the earth have been well learnt, he chooses rather to remain in the earth's vicinity—to be of service to struggling humanity until all have reached the same point—rather than, attain Mukti. Here is the soul of the perfected being, the flower of humanity at the threshold of Nirvâna, marking out the path for those who fritter not their energies away in the transitory pleasures of life. It is by the Path of Service that we help these great ones and earn the title of "Helpers of Humanity." Incalculable as are the benefits conferred on us by H.P. B's teachings, this one in particular will ever remain inseparably associated with her.

But it is in the daily life of the world that this knowledge may be gained, for we must bear in mind that it was in the din of battle that the teachings of the Gîtâ were given to Arjuna, and in the deafening shouts of the combitants the devoted deciple heard the Song Celestial—sung by the Charioteer—the Bhagavan himself. We are not more favourably circumstanced than was Arjuna, and if we hope at all to hear this song it must be while we are still in the midst of earthly distractions, where our senses are assailed on every hand.

In conclusion let us implore the blessing of the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion on all workers scattered over the world, and once more let us find courage in H. P. B's words, "when to the permanent is sacrificed the mutable the prize is thine, the drop returneth whence it came." The open path leads to the changeless change, Nirvâna, the glorious state of absoluteness, the bliss past human thought.

The one remains, the many change and pass;
 Heavens light forever shines, earths shadows fly;
 Life like a dome of many coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of eternity.

—Shelly.

THE YOGA PHILOSOPHY.*

Yoga, or human hibernations, being only prolonged sleep, it is interesting to notice that there are instances on record of individuals sleeping for weeks, months, nay, even for years.

We have ourself known a Russian Lady—Mme. Kasherevna off—whose sister, then an unmarried lady about twenty-seven, slept regularly for six weeks at a time. After that period she would awake, weak but not very exhausted, and ask for some milk, her habitual food. At the end of a fortnight, sometimes three weeks, she would begin to show unmistakable signs of somnolence, and at the end of a month fall into her trance again. Thus it lasted for seven years, she being considered by the populace a great saint. It was in 1841. What became of her after that we are unable to say.

Yoga has been differently defined by different authorities. Some have defined it as mental abstraction; some have defined it as silent prayer; some have defined it as the union of the inspired to the expired air; some have defined it as the union of mind to soul. But by Yoga, I understand the art of suspending the respiration and circulation. Yoga is chiefly divided into Râja Yoga and Hatha Yoga.

Here the author falls into an unmistakable error. He confounds the Râja with Hatha Yogins, where as the former have nothing to do with the physical training of the Hatha nor with any other of the innumerable sects who have now adopted the name and emblems of Yogins. Wilson, in his Essays on the Religions of the Hindus, falls into the same confusion, and knows very little, if any thing at all of the true Râja Yogins, who have no more to do with Shiva than with Vishnu, or any other deity. Alone, the most learned among the Shankara's Dandins of Northern India, especially those who are settled in Râjputâna, would be able—if they were willing—to give some correct notions about the Râja Yogins; for these men, who have adopted the philosophical tenets of Shankara's Vedânta are, moreover, profoundly versed in the doctrines of the Tantras—termed devilish by those who either do not understand them or reject their tenets with some preconceived object. If in speaking of the Dandins we have used above the phrase beginning with the conjunction “if” it is because we happen to know how carefully the secrets of the real Yogins—nay even their existence itself—are denied within this fraternity. It is comparatively but lately that the usual excuse adopted by them, in support of

* The paragraphs in small type are summarized from an article in The Theosophist to which H. P. B. attached notes. We insert them to render the comments intelligible.

which they bring their strongest authorities, who affirm that the Yoga state is unattainable in the present or Kali age, has been set afloat by them.

"From the unsteadiness of the senses, the prevalence of sin in the Kali, and the shortness of life, how can exaltation by Yoga be obtained?" Enquires Kâshikhana. But this declaration can be refuted in two words and with their own weapons. The duration of the present Kali Yuga is 432,000 years, of which 4,979 have already expired. It is at the very beginning of Kali Yuga that Krishna and Arjuna were born. It is since Vishnu's eighth incarnation that the country had all its historical Yogins, for as to the prehistoric ones, or those claimed as such, we do not find ourselves entitled to force them upon public notice. Are we then to understand that none of these numerous saints, philosophers and ascetics from Krishna down to the late Vishnu Brahmachâri Bawa of Bombay had ever reached the "exaltation by Yoga"? To repeat this assertion is simply suicidal to their own interests.

It is not among the Hatha Yogins—men who at times had reached through a physical and well-organized system of training the highest powers as "wonder workers"—there has never been a man worthy of being considered as a true Yogi. What we say is simply this: the Râja Yogi trains but his mental and intellectual powers, leaving the physical alone and making but little of the exercise of phenomena simply of a physical character. Hence it is the rarest thing in the world to find a real Yogi boasting of being one, or willing to exhibit such powers—though *he does acquire them as well as the one practising Hatha Yoga, but through another and far more intellectual system.* Generally they deny these powers point-blank, for reasons but too well grounded. The former need not even belong to any apparent order of ascetics, and are oftner known as private individuals than members of a religious fraternity, nor need they necessarily be Hindus. Kabir, who was one of them, fulminates against most of the later sects of mendicants who occasionally become warriors when not simply brigands, and sketches them with a masterly hand.

I never beheld such a Yogi, O brother, who, forgetting his doctrine, roves about in negligence. He follows professedly the faith of Mahâdeva and calls himself an eminent teacher: the scene of his abstraction is the fair or the market. Mâyâ is the mistress of the false saint. When did Dattâtraya demolish a dwelling? When did Sukhadeva collect an armed host? When did Narada mount a matchlock? When did Vyâsadeva blow a trumpet? &c.

Therefore, whenever the author—Dr. Paul—speaks of Râja Yoga, the Hatha simply is to be understood.

Minute directions then follow for the practising of postures, the repetition of Mantras; and Yâmyâsana and Prânâyâma or the inspiration and suspension of the breath.

All the above are, as we said before, the practices of Hatha Yoga, and conducive but to the production of physical phenomena affording very rarely flashes of real clairvoyance, unless it be a kind of feverish state of artificial ecstasy. If we publish them, it is merely for the great value we set upon this information as liable to afford a glimpse of truth to sceptics, by showing them that even in the case of the Hatha Yogins, the cause for the production of the phenomena as well as the results obtained can be all explained scientifically, and that therefore there is no need to either reject the phenomena *a priori* and without investigation or to attribute them to any but natural, though occult powers, more or less latent in every man and woman.

Dr. Paul next describes the eight varieties, Kumbhaka, which Yogins practise with a view to study the nature of the Soul. Khechari Mudrâ is the lengthening the tongue by splitting and then "milking" it until it is long enough to be turned back into the gullet, and, with its point, to press the epiglottis and so close the rima glottidis, which confines the inspired air within the system, the lungs and intestines being completely filled. By this practice he becomes insensible to every thing that is external. "Without it," says Dr. Paul "*he can never be absorbed into God.*"

As the science and study of Yoga Philosophy pertains to Buddhist, Lamaic and other religions supposed to be atheistical, i.e., rejecting belief in a personal deity, and as a Vedântin would by no means use such an expression, we must understand the term "absorption into God" in the sense of union with Universal Soul or Parama-Purusha—the primal or One Spirit.

Directions are then given for the practice of Mulabandha, a process by which youth is said to be restored to an old man.

This posture will hardly have the desired effect unless its philosophy is well understood and it is practised from youth the appearance of old age, when the skin has wrinkled and the tissues have relaxed, can be restored but temporarily, and with the help of Mâyâ. The Mûlabandha is simply a process to throw one self into sleep (thus gaining the regular hours of sleep).

—*The Modern Panarion.*

(To be continued.)

BOOK NOTES.

THE name of Dr. J. M. Peebles will be familiar to many readers as the author of "Seers of the ages" and other works. His latest book "*Three Journeys round the world*" is a handsomely bound volume of 445 pages, which has just come into our hands from the Banner of Light Publishing Co. The author here describes the scenery, history, people, mythology, religion etc. of the Pacific Island, New Zealand, Australia, Egypt, China, Ceylon, and India. Needless to say a report on visits to so many countries and places cannot help containing much valuable information and interesting reading. Dr. Peebles is a spiritualist and indeed, as he tells us, was the first pioneer who came from America to lecture on spirituatum in London. On turning over the pages of the present volume, one very soon finds out that the title of the book by no means indicates the contents within the cover, but is to a large extent a peg on which to hang spiritualistic teaching and mediumistic utterances. But to come to the matter itself. First there is a portrait, presumably of the author—though with becoming modesty he refrains from appending his signature. Then follows a eulogy on California, his native land, from which one would conclude that it is the concentrated essence of all that is best in the three worlds.

Seances are held at different places on the way, the "spirit" communications received, forming a considerable portion of the book. While ascending the Great Pyramid one of the company, Dr. Dunn is suddenly and unconsciously taken possession of by a "spirit control" who entrances him and causes some confusion—an ancient Egyptian is responsible, and makes amends by describing the condition of Egyptian affairs in his time.

India naturally fills much space. At Madras he visits a Yogi, accompanied by Dr. English and Mr. Knendson, and after remarking on the absence of chairs or seats in the Yogi's hermitage says:—"Sitting in this old Yogi's hut I felt like saying. Push an opening up through this thatched roof and let in Gods fresh air and sunlight; go and wash yourself; go and put on some nice clean garments; stand up straight instead of squatting on the ground like a toad; work six or eight hours a day at some useful manual labour, and the rest of the time if you choose meditate. It is in remarks like this that we catch the true feeling of the author, with regard to thing orient; for our part we cannot but feel

that perhaps the unclothed Yogi is after all as near enlightenment as the trousered western medium, who falls into a trance he knows not when, and is possessed by entities he knows not who. We do not deny that the West—and California especially—are go-a-head, but little will it profit the western traveller if he seeks to measure the unrivalled East by western standards, or expects to bring it up to (or down to) the western level. The author pays a tribute however to the "magnificent Vedanta Philosophy almost the equivalent of the Spiritual Philosophy in America?"

Vivekānanda and his work is also dealt with, and though the author is somewhat hard upon him in some parts, he gives him the credit of enlightening the West by his mission.

The Palestine tour closes with a most useful chapter "on Christianity of the ages" in fact the book teams with suggestive ideas. It is copiously illustrated, and is written in an easy and attractive style.

Notes and News.

THE *Prasnotterā*, for April, reports that the long contemplated Central Hindu College at Benares is to be started next July. Briefly the main objects of this College are—(1) To revive the ancient spirit of true reverence and gentleness, and counteract the ever increasing spirit of scoffing and luxury-seeking, in the rising Hindu generation. (2) To meet the growing need for Education independent of the pecuniary means of the student—as it ever was in the older times in India—a need which is now keenly felt since Government has raised the scale of fees so high, in its own and aided Colleges, as to put a liberal education beyond the reach of a very large, and indeed the most deserving, class of students. The maximum fee for College classes is limited to Rs. 3 and for School classes Rs. 1. (3) Through the Theosophical Society—which is at present the bridge between the East and West—to draw from the younger West that vigour and life which shall enable the East to give in return the experience of a mature nation, that it may again assume the dignity of Teacher of Spiritual Knowledge.

Such training can only be secured by an Institution which will be a teaching place as well as a home, where the students may live and be guided from hour to hour of their life, under

the superintendence of those who realize the true spirit of Hinduism. The practical difficulties in the way of opening, at once, a completely formed College and Boarding house, have led the committee to make a small beginning with the help of only a few friends, leaving the scheme to develop as time goes on. Only two classes will at present be opened, viz. Entrance and First Year classes. We trust that India's sons will not be behind hand in helping on this noble work. The Secretary and Treasurer is Babu Govinda Das, Central Hindu College, Benares.

* *

IN the *Vahan* for March we are informed that Mr. G. R. S. Mead, who has for so many years filled the difficult and arduous post of General Secretary of the European section, is about to hand over the work to our friend and colleague the Hon. Otway Cuffe. Mr. Mead has asked the Executive Committee to relieve him of his official duties from May 1st until the convention in July, when his successor will be formally elected.

* *

MR. MEAD as is well known was one of the earliest workers with Madam Blavatsky, and has seen the Theosophical Society through all the storms of the past, and now that the section is healthy, and times are peaceful, he wishes to develop those particular lines of theosophic study the results of which have been of such interest and value to us hitherto, and with which he will no doubt still further embellish the theosophic literature of the future. Mr. Mead is one of those enviable people who make time where it is short, and with a zeal, inherited from his and our great teacher, coupled with scholarly ability of the first order, is doing a work probably little realized in the East, by pointing the intellectual community in the West to the great principles of Theosophy.

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THE Hon. Otway Cuffe it will be remembered, contributed to the *Lucifer* of the past a valuable series of articles on Sufism among other writings. He has endeared himself to many students by the help and council he is ever ready to bestow. The fact that Mr. Mead has been able to retire is proof,

if proof were wanted, that the right man has been found to take his place.

* * *

CEYLON is just now the centre of considerable spiritual and mental activity. Our Brother Harry Banbery is busily engaged in raising the Kandy High School to the dignity of a College, to be divided into two parts, one for the education of Priests, the other for Lay Scholars. He is well supported especially by the younger priests who are anxious to form themselves into a strong body powerful enough to remedy abuses and safe guard their religion. Good priests, good people, is an axiom which holds good in every country, and we wish our Ceylon friends every success in this respect.

FROM the *Rays of Light* we learn that Miss de Silva one of the pupils of the *Museus School*, has won honours for the Institution and herself, in passing the Cambridge Local Examination. She is the first girl from any Buddhist Institution who has secured this distinction. We heartily congratulate Mrs. Higgings and her assistants and hope that ere long the much needed funds for extention of the School will be forthcoming, so that the Government grant (conditional on such alterations) may be claimed, and more successes won.

* * *

COLOMBO witnessed a most sensational and imposing ceremony last month in the opening of the Ethico-Psychological College, under the supervision of *Anagarika Dharmapala*. A procession of thirty thousand Buddhists—consisting of white robed men and women, boys and girls, and oranged robed priests—marched to the music of the band, to the beautiful grounds of the Rajgire Hermitage, where the College stands, and the opening ceremony was then performed with all due attention to the solemnity of the occasion. We wish our old friend Dharmapala all success in his new undertaking, but let not the fiery serpent of intolerance for others (who are also working in the cause of truth) mar his work.

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KAVI DULPATRAM DAHYABHAI, C. I. E, the blind poet of Gujerat, has passed away this life. He taught Theosophy in his poems which were introduced in the Gujerati series of standard books used in the Schools when the Theosophical

Society was not established in India ; when the Society was established he became a staunch member of it, and composed verses in Gujerati in praise of the Founders, which will be found in some of the early numbers of the *Theosophist*.

* * *

ONE of the most popular and wide-spread beliefs is that the moon affects the weather. Science has for years denied that any relation existed between the two. Mr. McDowell in a paper on this subjects in *Knowledge* for January, sums up the attitude of science with regard to such beliefs as follows—Science steps in to examine them ; She tests and measures, sees them to be very faulty, puts them aside as worthless and vain. But there comes a time when this judgement has to be revised, and considerable grains of truth are found among the rubbish. There are signs, he says, that the denial of lunar influence on the weather has been made too confidently. He shows that the state of the weather as indicated by the hight of the barometer, bears a very distinct relation to the Moon's phases. Thus it was found that during the last six months of the year 1897 the full and new moon fell on those days when the barometer stood at its highest. A more extended study shows however that although such coincidences may last without break for long periods, there comes a time when for some cause or other, it entirely disappears, to reappear again later on ; the last half of last year being a good example of such correspondence. Similar agreements were noticed for the years 1874, '83, '89, '93, '94, but this was not so for the intervening years Mr. McDowell is carrying his observations into this year, and we hope to be able to report how far the correspondence is kept up.

This is an important example of lunar influence on our globe, once denied now being proved by scientific means.

* * *

THE latest malady laid at the door of the long suffering Micro-organism, is sun-stroke. Dr. Sambon writing to the *British Medical Journal* thinks that sun-stroke is an infectious disease, due to specific organisms in the superficial layers of the soil, and spread over certain well defined geographical areas, where they are inhaled as dust. In support of his theory, he says the occurrence of epidemics may decimate hospital wards while men exposed to greater heat and sun outside, are unaffected. The organism has not yet been isolated.